
To be or not to be a politician: profile and governmental career of Portuguese junior ministers

Ser o no ser político: perfil y carrera gubernativa de los secretarios de Estado portugueses

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Abstract

This paper analyses the socio-political profile and the governmental career of the junior ministers who held office in Portugal between 1976 and 2011, putting the focus on the differentiation between individuals with and without prior political experience. Contrary to what is indicated in the literature, the results of this investigation reveal that most of these individuals are politically inexperienced and have a short and occasional governmental career. There are, however, important differences if we consider their political background, which confirms the relevance of the distinction between political and non-political junior ministers.

Keywords: Elites, political elites, political recruitment, governmental career, junior ministers, government, Portuguese democracy.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza el perfil sociopolítico y la carrera gubernamental de los secretarios de Estado que asumieron el cargo en Portugal entre 1976 y 2011, poniendo el foco en la diferenciación entre los individuos con y sin experiencia política previa. Contrariamente a lo que se indica en la literatura, los resultados de esta investigación revelan que la mayoría de estos individuos es políticamente inexperta y tiene carrera gubernamental breve y ocasional. Sin embargo, existen diferencias importantes si tenemos en cuenta los antecedentes políticos, lo que confirma la importancia de la distinción entre secretarios de Estado políticos y no políticos.

Palabras clave: élites, élites políticas, reclutamiento político, carrera gubernamental, secretarios de Estado, gobierno, democracia portuguesa.

INTRODUCTION

Thirty years ago, Jean Blondel wrote the seminal study *Government Ministers in the contemporary world* (1985), one of the key works in the systematic exploration of the ministers' profile and their governmental career. This author started from the idea that the strategic institutional position of ministers allows them to hold resources and conditions the results of the political system at a higher level than other politicians, which makes them "actors in the strong sense of the word", and therefore deserving of special attention from researchers (*Ibid.* 1985: 7). Using a comparative approach, the author fixed his attention on ministers' recruitment and governmental career, two of the most significant dimensions in the analysis of governmental elites. In the footsteps of Blondel, an influential line of research has since deepened this analysis, allowing thorough knowledge, both nationally and compared, of the social and political characteristics of European ministers and the main specificities of their governmental career (Dogan, 1989; Blondel & Thiébault, 1991; Stefan, 2004; Tavares de Almeida *et al.*, 2006; Blondel *et al.*, 2007; Dowding & Dumont, 2009; Rodriguez-Teruel, 2011)¹.

Nevertheless, unlike ministers, junior ministers have remained largely *terra incognita* in the political science literature. In spite of their integration in the governmental elite, junior ministers have had a clearly meagre treatment. According to Thies, "while comprehensive data sets on ministers are now available, data on junior ministers and other institutional arrangements within cabinets are rare finds" (2001: 47). The further address of this position emerged in the UK. Milne (1949) was one of the first authors devoted to the study of junior ministers. In 1987, Theakston published *Junior Ministers*, a work that would be a reference in this subject (Theakston, 1987) and continued it in more recent works (Theakston, 1999; Theakston *et al.*, 2012; McMaster & Bairner, 2012). Although these British authors have initiated and developed an important discussion on the role of the junior ministers in government, this discussion was restricted to the UK and not aimed at the thorough knowledge of the socio-political profile and governmental careers of these actors. Only recently, preliminary studies on the junior ministers of the Spanish democracy have emerged, where the focus is on patterns of recruitment (Real-Dato & Rodriguez-Teruel, 2013; Real-Dato, Rodriguez-Teruel & Jerez-Mir, 2013)².

The main reason for the lack of literature is mainly the widespread understanding that they become (exclusively) relevant in coalition governments. So, they become a reward of party elites in the context of the creation of a coalition government (Laver & Schofield, 1985). From another point of view, they would be a means of partisan balance at the time of distribution of governmental portfolios, ensuring some proportionality to the coalition parties (Mershon, 1996; Manow & Zorn, 2004). These arguments have been made in

1. Previous important works include Wilson (1959), Ollé-Laprune (1962), Dogan (1967), Rose (1971), Headey (1974), Birnbaum (1982) and Gaxie (1983).

2. Although these working papers present only preliminary conclusions, we use them in this article as an important source of comparison between Portuguese and Spanish junior ministers.

particular to Italy (Cotta & Verzichelli, 2007: 121) and Spain (Bar, 1988: 130). However, Magone states that the balance of portfolios is not a relevant reality in Portugal, due to the importance of the Prime Minister in the selection of ministers and junior ministers (2000: 549-550).

Another perspective associated with coalition governments perceives junior ministers as a means to control government officials belonging to the other party (Thies, 2001; Verzichelli, 2008; Carroll & Cox, 2012; Indridason & Kristinsson, 2013; Falcó-Gimeno, 2014). According to this view, they would function as a kind of “watchdogs”, controlling the minister’s initiatives, or “guidedogs”, being effective communication links between the two parties (Andrews & Irwin, 2005: 128). However, Verzichelli (2008: 261) empirically tested the minister’s function of control, and concluded, by analyzing the partisan composition of the ministries in coalition governments, that junior ministers with these functions in Portugal are not usual.

Outside the scope of the analysis of junior ministers in coalition governments, the literature looks at this position as having a learning character. Indeed, authors such as De Winter (1991: 60) and Theakston *et al.* (2012) have seen junior ministers as “minister’s apprentices”, either as a test of adaptability to the governing problems of individuals without political experience or as a means of sectorial specialization of the most politicized elites. For this reason, only short subchapters or occasional references have been reserved to these political actors in works focused on ministerial recruitment or governmental structure (Blondel, 1982; Blondel & Müller-Rommel, 1988; De Winter, 1991; Searing, 1989, 1994).

On the other hand, both the perspective that sees the junior ministers as partisan pawns in coalition governments and the one that gives them a learning function aimed at ministerial ascent have difficulty interpreting the position of junior ministers in countries such as Portugal, where there are several one-party governments and those hold a significant importance in the day-to-day life of the ministry, particularly in terms of policy formulation (Lobo, 2005b: 190, 193; Miranda & Sousa, 1985). Consequently, junior ministers with a strong degree of politicization and junior ministers without political background seem to coexist in these countries. This is, however, a perception that lacks empirical confirmation, as the existing studies are extremely rare. For Portugal, in particular, we do not know any specific and systematic research on junior ministers (hereinafter referred to as secretaries of state, the Portuguese official term) of the democratic period. The only specific work on secretaries (and under-secretaries) of state in Portugal is the study by Carvalho and Fernandes (2003). These authors identify the socio-political profile and analyze the governmental career of these individuals during the period known as Marcellismo (1968-1974), comparing ministers, members of Parliament and secretaries/under-secretaries of state.

Thus, some questions remain to be answered. What are Portuguese junior ministers for? What characteristics and experiences do they hold and how can their careers in government be characterized? What are the main differences between the junior ministers who

have a political profile and the have-nots? This article aims to answer these questions through an analysis of the recruitment and governmental career of the Portuguese secretaries of state appointed between July 1976 and March 2011, i.e., from the first to the thirteenth constitutional government³. Consequently, our unit of analysis are individuals who were secretaries of state, no matter how many times they had been named, so our database contains 555 individuals. We deliberately left out of the analysis the secretaries of state who were appointed in provisional governments (1974-1976) as we seek an analysis of executives whose legitimacy is attributed by a stable democratic constitutional framework, which exists since the Constitution of 1976.

Our hypothesis assumes that the position of the secretary of state in Portugal is not only strictly political, being mainly held by individuals with no political experience. On the other hand, we believe that the recruitment and career on the government of secretaries of state with political experience is significantly different from that of secretaries of state with no political experience. We started from the idea that each individual is chosen by the government according to the skills by which they are essentially recognized in the political community. Of course, these skills come from their experiences prior to the appointment to the position, where the political experience is of central importance. The very name “independent”, quite common in Portugal, expresses the profile of someone who is not primarily recognized for their political skills but rather by their sectoral or management expertise. In this sense, we can consider that an individual with political experience may have personal characteristics and a different governmental career than an individual without this experience.

The next part of this article contains a brief background of the role of secretaries of state role in the governance structure in Portugal. In the second part, we analyze the political experience accumulated by secretaries of state at the time of their first appointment, as this analysis will identify the main routes of access to a governmental career, and it will also assess the political profile of these actors. In the third part, we analyze their main socio-demographic characteristics. The profile that emerges from this analysis will demonstrate the importance of certain social characteristics and educational and/or professional credentials. In the last part, we intend to obtain a characterization of the passage of secretaries of state through government. We will note the most important aspects, such as the length of governmental career, the governmental mobility, the portfolios and the ministerial ascent. These dimensions as well as the socio-demographic features will be analyzed in the light of the distinction between political and non-political.

3. For this purpose we constructed a SPSS database, essentially populated by documentary research based in primary sources such as curricula in public registers (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Government website, *Diário da República*, Parliamentary Archives, parties files, institutional websites) but also on secondary sources of credibility and recognized quality (biographies of public figures such as Mário Soares, Freitas do Amaral and Cavaco Silva) and, alternatively, using the written press. We accessed the “Regime change and ministerial elite transformation in Southern Europe” Project Database, coordinated by Professors Pedro Tavares de Almeida, António Costa Pinto and Nancy Bermeo, and autonomous databases from researchers João Pedro Ruivo and Thierry Dias Coelho, so our gratitude goes to them all.

SECRETARIES OF STATE IN PORTUGAL

After the Revolution of April 25, 1974, which restored democracy in Portugal, the role of secretaries of state is only understandable in the light of the structure of government designed by the Constitution of 1976. According to article 185/2, secretaries of state have as their primary duty the direct collaboration with the ministers, as well as their replacement. They have no legislative or administrative original jurisdiction, and the definition of their responsibilities varies depending on what is stipulated in the order for appointment or decree-law (article 183/3 of the Constitution). They perform duties delegated by ministers in specific portfolios within the ministry, which means that they ensure in practice the connection in a given specific area between the ministry and the administrative institutions under their purview, as well as the effective implementation of policies delegated to them. The portfolio assigned to the secretary of state expresses, in general, which are these administrative institutions and these policies, specifying his responsibilities.

The relevance and autonomy of secretaries of state in Portugal, particularly in the policy-making process, has been underlined by the scarce literature devoted to the subject (Lobo, 2005b: 190, 193) and reinforced by former ministers and secretaries of state (Miranda & Sousa, 1985). However, and despite being an integral part of the government structure of most European countries, there is considerable cross-country variation of the duties performed by these political actors. Generally they share little constitutional significance, the functional dependence on the minister, the departmental and not governmental level of responsibility (except the secretary of state for the presidency, if any). Müller and Strøm define junior ministers as “political appointees who do not have voting rights in the cabinet” (2000: 23) and Manow offers a more precise definition: “government positions and political appointees which do not formulate policy and prepare legislation on their own” (2008: 6-7). Blondel (1982: 211) refers to the position just as a second-tier under the Minister. However, as the last author acknowledges, a large plurality of designations and duties between different governments falls under this definition (*ibid.* 1982: 214-215)⁴.

THE ROUTE TO POWER: POLITICAL AND NON-POLITICAL PATHWAYS

The previous political career is one of the factors with greater capacity to condition the selecting choice (Cabannes, 1990: 71). The acquired political skills, for example, in a parliamentary, partisan or previous executive experience (even if they did not take place immediately prior to the appointment) may well prove essential for the selection as secretary of state. In this connection, it can be identified the preferred political channels of

4. For a comparative and (essentially) formal analysis of secretaries of state duties, see Manow (2008: 7-12).

access to the governmental career, as well as the degree of politicization of the actors who access the referred careers.

The parliamentary route is usually considered one of the main paths towards positions in government (De Winter, 1991). Its relative importance is confirmed in the Portuguese case since the position of the national parliament members is one of the most relevant in the *cursus honorum* of the Portuguese secretaries of state, being surpassed only by party executive members (table 1). However, in absolute terms, only one in five of these individuals had had a parliamentary seat before ascending to government and the majority of those who held a position as members of parliament did so during a single mandate. On the other hand, the number of secretaries of state with parliamentary experience in the legislative assemblies of the Autonomous Regions or the European parliament is virtually non-existent. We verify very similar results in the Spanish case, with a rate of about 20% of secretaries of state with previous experience as parliamentarians in the period 1977-2010 (Real-Dato & Rodriguez-Teruel, 2013: 22). A substantial difference when compared to the Portuguese case is the relevance of regional parliamentary experience, yet not exceeding 8% in Spain.

The low rate of parliamentarism of the Portuguese secretaries of state can be interpreted primarily as a result of the substantial autonomy enjoyed by the Prime Ministers when choosing the governmental cast (Portas & Valente, 1990; Silva, 2002, 2004; Lobo, 2005a). In the specific case of the secretaries of state, the choice is often left to the discretion of the minister, who, enjoying such autonomy, uses the sectoral or management expertise as a main selection criterion (Portas & Valente, 1990: 334; Silva, 2002: 108). Secondly, there is a tendency in the Portuguese political system to relatively undervalue the role of parliamentary structures, such as commissions and parliamentary groups, despite the parliamentary rationalization trend (Leston-Bandeira, 2004). Finally, it must be borne in mind that there is an important tendency to choose “technocrats” and “independents” for the Portuguese governments (Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2006: 53; Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2012).

Alongside the parliamentary experience, the party experience is considered one of the most important to access government positions since one of the main functions and defining characteristics of political parties is the selection of political elites (Czudnowski, 1975: 225; Putnam, 1976: 49). This is, in fact, the political office held for more secretaries of state at the time of appointment. However, only about 26% of the individuals exerted party executive functions of national or regional nature.

The reasons for the relatively low politicization of the secretaries of state should be addressed taking into account the structural weakness of the Portuguese parties, since there are traditionally low levels of territorial and social penetration (Jalali, 2007). The perception of this phenomenon has even led parties to promote pre-election initiatives for civil society, which have served as launch pads for the appointment of “independents” for government (Ferreira-Pereira, 2008; Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2012: 10). As an example, in the first of these initiatives, promoted by the Socialist Party in 1995 and called “*Estados*

Gerais” (General States), a wide range of different people with and without partisan involvement participated and were later be invited to enter government. In the specific case of the secretaries of state, two out of three individuals named in the thirteenth government participated in the General States. Moreover, 15 of the 32 appointed secretaries of state who were independent—that is, who had no party affiliation, had participated in this pre-election initiative.

TABLE I.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE OF PORTUGUESE SECRETARIES OF STATE (1976-2011)

	Nr*	%
With political experience	190	34.23
<i>Parliament**</i>		
Member of national parliament	109	19.64
Member of regional parliament	3	0.54
Member of european parliament	5	0.90
<i>Party ***</i>		
Party executive member	146	26.31
<i>National party executive member</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>22.52</i>
<i>Regional party executive member</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>15.14</i>
<i>Regional or local</i>		
Prefect (Civil governor)	8	1.44
Member of Regional Government	3	0.54
Mayor	10	1.80
Councillor	32	5.77
Member of City Council	35	6.31
<i>Executive</i>		
Under-secretary of State	22	3.96
WITHOUT POLITICAL EXPERIENCE	365	65.77
Total	555	100.00

Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

* Concerns to positions held before the first appointment as secretary of state. Multiple counting was used in order to account for individuals with various positions.

** Individuals who were elected to Parliament but never held office for having been immediately selected to government are excluded from the count.

*** We consider national party executive members individuals who have integrated national bodies of the parties; we consider regional party executive members individuals who have integrated district bodies of the parties, according to their statutes in force at the time of their appointment. Local political positions were disregarded because there are no consolidated official sources.

This low politicization is particularly true for secretaries of state due to the very specific sectoral nature of this position, especially as opposed to the more general nature of the ministerial office. Indeed, as one moves down the governmental structure, the

specificity of governance areas increases and it would be natural to increase the tendency to choose more specialized individuals, accordingly.

On access to office, the executive experience, as under-secretary of state, does not stand out as being a particularly important political experience, but we should take into account that this position is not formally part of the government structure, existing only in a few executives and in some specific ministries along the Portuguese democracy.

The regional or local politics is in many countries a real springboard for governmental careers (Thiébault, 1991). However, in Portugal previous political experience at regional and local levels did not represent more than 6% of previous experiences of secretaries of state. The low representation of regional political experience as access port to this position is necessarily linked to the fact that Portugal takes the form of a unitary—but administratively decentralized—state. Indeed, in Spain, both ministers (Rodríguez-Teruel, 2011: 315-322) and secretaries of state (Real-Dato & Rodríguez-Teruel, 2013: 22) have more experience in regional political arenas. Moreover, the lack of territorial dimension and the absence of notable cultural cleavages were two important factors to prevent the strengthening of identities and regional political practices in Portugal.

Another reason associated with the low representation of regional political experience in Portugal is the fact that the regional offices have always maintained a great autonomy from the national political process: while the prefects have become increasingly controlled positions by the regional party structures, the composition of regional governments remained within the autonomy of the regional parties. With regard to local political experience, the low number of big cities in Portugal has rarely allowed for the construction of solid municipal careers, with sufficient national projection to promote access to government offices. On the other hand, only recently the Portuguese local governments have known more autonomy and financial capacity, considered important conditions for the passage from a local political career to a governmental political career (Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2006: 52-3; Thiébauld, 1991: 31).

The parliamentary, party, executive and regional or local routes are several types of political background where individuals can acquire relevant skills in order to be appointed secretary of state. These experiences often overlap, not being so rare the cases of individuals who accumulate, in particular, parliamentary and party experiences. This is what Blondel (1985) refers to as “party-cum-parliamentary route”. In the Portuguese case, about 15% of secretaries of state accumulated, at the time of their first appointment, these two types of political experiences.

At the other end of the spectrum lie individuals who were appointed without any of these political experiences, representing 65.77% of the total. This political inexperience is often counterbalanced with high specialization. In Blondel’s own words, “Western governments may place great emphasis on representation; but the question of technical competence cannot altogether be avoided” (1985: 191). This author was one of the first to draw attention to the importance of a systematic and comparative study of the specialization of ministers (*ibid.*). Blondel’s studies aimed at overcoming the traditional dichotomy between

political ministers and ministers originating from Public Administration or the military sector by creating a new typology that would better reflect the link between prior professional experience and the ministerial portfolio. To this end, he used a differentiating criterion based on the adequacy of the previously exercised profession and the ministerial portfolio to which the individual was appointed, resulting in two distinct types of ministers: “amateurs”, when there is no link between the previous occupation and the portfolio; and “specialists” when the portfolio is closely related to its previous occupation (*ibid.*: 22-23).

The essential difference is between those who had a specific preparation to perform the ministerial function at stake and those who had no such preparation (*ibid.*: 23). Although Blondel does not make a longitudinal analysis of the technical expertise of ministers, his typology and the realization that “[i]n every region of the world specialists are a substantial proportion of all ministers” (*ibid.*: 195) had great influence on later studies, such as those by Müller-Rommel (1988), Bakema and Secker (1988), De Winter (1991), Beckman (2006) and Rodríguez-Teruel (2011).

Most of these studies use, on the footsteps of Blondel, differentiating criteria related to the adequacy of experiences (academic, professional and even political) prior to appointment and the portfolio held by the minister. The main exception is De Winter, who uses as the sole criterion the political experience (parliamentary and party), creating a binary typology that includes “insiders” and “outsiders”. The first have a minimum of 10 year parliamentary experience together with party experience at national level, while the latter do not have any prior political experience (De Winter, 1991: 44-7). With this distinction, the author manages to differentiate ministers who were chosen for their political skills and those who were chosen because of their sectoral and/or management expertise:

“[n]on-parliamentary ministers may be regarded as not being true politicians, especially if they do not belong to the leadership circles of their party. They appear to be men and women who have reached the government because they are specialists in the subject matter of the department or have experience as managers of large or complex organizations. [...] such men and women can be regarded as outsiders” (*ibid.*: 46).

We believe that the De Winter’s typology is preferable to the previous because it seems to be more convincing from the ministerial recruitment point of view and fits particularly to the position of secretary of state. Indeed, this distinction holds, in essence, the reason for choosing a particular minister or secretary of state. This criteria allows, therefore, to include as “outsiders” not only individuals selected for having expertise in their portfolio, but also those who have a manager profile, due to their academic and/or professional background, although such training or route are not related to the portfolio they take. Tavares de Almeida and Pinto (2012) apply a very similar criterion for Portugal and give the example of the Health Minister of the Nineteenth Constitutional Government, Paulo Macedo,

formerly senior official of the Ministry of Finance and manager of a private bank: despite there was no match between his education or career and the ministerial portfolio, Macedo was unanimously considered a non-political. On the other hand, the secretaries of state's portfolios have a much more specific content than the ministerial ones and, therefore, to require an appropriate professional or educational experience would excessively restrict the category of non-political secretaries of state.

We have adapted, however, the criteria used by De Winter by better adjusting to the earlier and more specific political career of the secretaries of state. Thus, we consider to be defining of political experience an extended set of political relevant offices, including: member of the national, regional or European parliament; national or regional party executive member, prefect, member of a regional government; mayor; councillor; member of a city council; and under-secretary of state. On the other hand, we consider it to be sufficient the exercise of any of these positions prior to the first appointment as secretary of state.

Therefore, throughout this article we shall call 'political' the secretaries of state who held some of the offices mentioned above. We will designate as 'non-political' the secretaries of state who have not exercised any of these positions, regardless of other functions of politicized nature, such as advisors or leaders of interest groups.

From the application of this distinction to the secretaries of state of the Portuguese democracy we verified the following results: 190 individuals fall under the category of 'political', corresponding to 34.2% of the total; and 365 'non-political individuals', corresponding to 65.8 %. This distinction corresponds to two parallel routes of entering government. Now we must understand the implications of this distinction in their socio-demographic profiles and governmental careers.

WHO RISES TO POWER: THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The recruitment of secretaries of state is a very selective choice of individuals who will join government, that is, one of the most restricted elite circles in power (Dogan, 1989). In this choice, certain personal characteristics and certain educational and/or professional credentials may prove decisive. When the secretary of state is chosen, these characteristics and credentials are taken into account, so it is possible to identify the collective socio-demographic profile of these individuals during the Portuguese democracy.

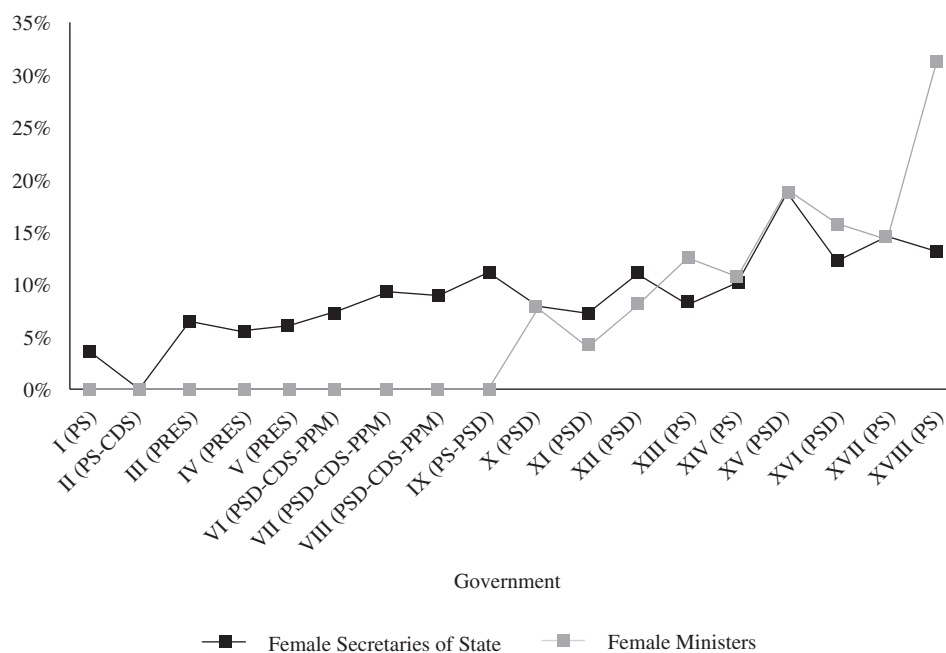
When considering gender, the office of secretary of state in Portugal is, almost exclusively, a male function, for 91% of subjects who exercised it were men. The low feminization rate of this position should be understood as a broader phenomenon, not unique to Portugal and not restricted to political elites (Viegas & Faria, 2001). Indeed, the proportion of female secretaries of state in the Spanish democracy (1977-2010) stands at 13.5% (Real-Dato & Rodríguez-Teruel, 2013: 12). The main factors involved are historical, cultural, sociological and economic as well as strictly political and they are often interconnected (Davis, 1997; Siaroff, 2000; Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2005).

If we take into account the different political profiles, the gender difference between political and non-political secretaries of state is not statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 0,438$, $p = 0,508$). Consequently, the claim that “specialist recruitment patterns aid in women in cabinet” (Siaroff, 2000: 209), is not confirmed for the Portuguese secretaries of state.

Although the 50 female secretaries of state represent only 9% of the analyzed universe, the proportion of women in this position has increased in Portugal over time. In fact, in the period between 1976 and 1995, the percentage of female secretaries of state was around 6%, but between 1995 and 2011 it reached to about 13%. The following chart shows the evolution from government to government, while also allowing for a comparison with women who have been ministers.

FIGURE 1.

FEMALE MINISTERS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE IN PORTUGAL (1976-2011)



Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

The arrival of women to ministerial positions was much later than their arrival to the position of secretary of state as the first female minister was named in 1985. Since then, the proportion of female secretaries of state and ministers was not very different, with the exception of Socrates II government (2009-2011), when about one-third of ministers were women as opposed to 13% of female secretaries of state.

As for age, the average age of access the office of secretary of state in Portugal is around 43 years old. Although the youngest person to be appointed was aged 25 years and the older was aged 67 years, appointments at these ages are exceptional, since about 80% of appointees are aged between 30 and 50 years. The distinction between the age profile of political and non-political secretaries of state is not very significant for, in average age of appointment of the former is 41 years and the latter is 43 years. The difference is accentuated slightly for the pre-30 years' appointees, where the relative weight of political secretaries of state is higher. Indeed, individuals with non-political profiles generally have a longer educational and professional career, which makes it more difficult for them to enter government before the age of 30. On the contrary, this situation becomes more usual in the case of individuals with a political profile: the early belonging to the party executive structures and/or the exercise of one or two terms as a Member of Parliament may constitute sufficient credentials to trigger a governmental appointment before or shortly after the age of 30.

Given that the position of secretary of state is for many of these individuals their first relevant political office, the age of 43 years can be considered relatively high, especially if one takes into account that the average age of the Portuguese ministers between 1974 and 1999 is around 46 years (Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2006: 34). It would be naturally expected that secretaries of state were in average younger than the ministers. However, we expected that, being secretaries of state often seen as "minister's apprentices", the difference could be more pronounced.

In educational terms, we can characterize the secretaries of state as highly qualified political elites since 96% of them had at the time of appointment a college degree. On the other hand, there is a considerable amount of individuals with a higher educational degree, including a PhD. In Spain, the secretaries of state also have a high level of education, to the extent that only about 2% of the individuals did not have university degrees and about 35% held diplomas of postgraduate studies or a PhD (Real-Dato & Rodríguez-Teruel, 2013: 14).

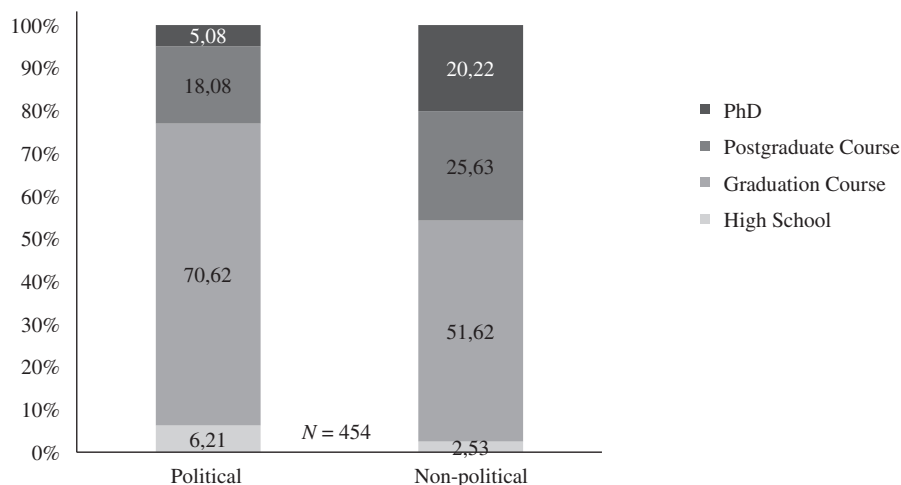
Education stands as a key differentiating attribute to these individuals ($\chi^2(3) = 30,293$, $p < 0,001$): non-political secretaries of state have more post-graduations and PhD than political secretaries of state. On the other hand, among the latter the proportion without university education is higher.

Law and Economics are their main academic areas, since about 59% held their highest level of education in these areas⁵. In addition to Law and Economics, Engineering and Social Sciences are noteworthy. In fact, these four areas represent about 84% of the academic degrees, which is remarkable especially when considering the growing diversity of university courses being offered in Portugal in recent decades.

5. Note that even if we take into account the whole academic career, the prevalence of individuals who received some degree (Bachelor, Post-graduate/Masters or PhD) in Law and Economics throughout their academic record remains. Thus, 32.5% studied Law at some point and 30% Economics.

FIGURE 2.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS OF PORTUGUESE SECRETARIES OF STATE ACCORDING TO THEIR POLITICAL OR NON-POLITICAL BACKGROUND



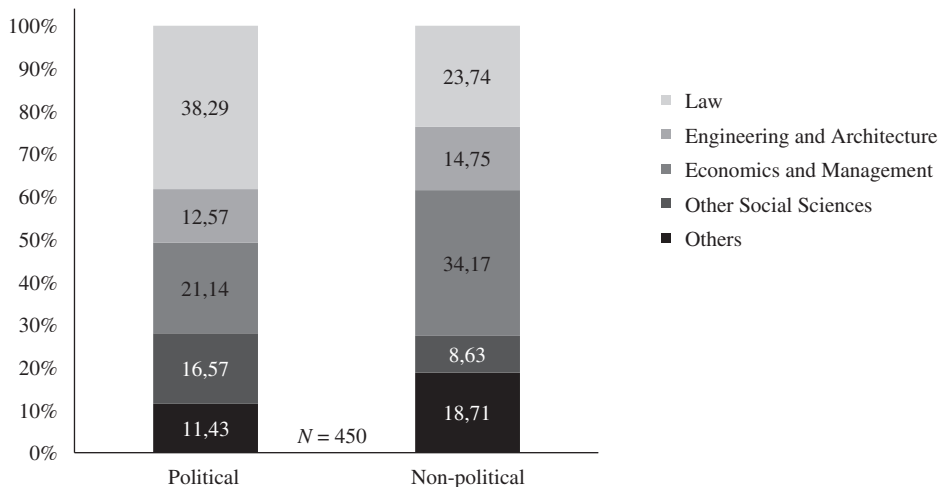
Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

Our data show that secretaries of state with and without a political background come from different training areas ($\chi^2(4) = 23,578$, $p < 0,001$). The trend for the prevalence of Law and Economics and, in a second place Engineering and Social Sciences remains when we distinguish between political and non-political. However, there are differences in the weight of these areas in each of these profiles. Indeed, although Law is the most widespread degree among secretaries of state, there are significant differences between non-political and political secretaries of state. Among the first Economics is the main training area and therefore among the last Law assumes a substantial weight. On the other hand, in the case of Engineering the difference is small but higher among non-political secretaries of state, whereas Social Sciences have a relatively higher weight among the political secretaries of state.

As Weber (2005: 81) reminded us, the profession of lawyer is associated to a number of important features for the exercise of political functions. The office of secretary of state, despite not sharing the requirement in argument and oratory that the office of minister or even members of Parliament have, carries out a diverse set of political functions where legal training can be an important competence (Theakston, 1987). Therefore, it is natural that it is between the political secretaries of state that Law is more relevant. On the other hand, the gradual increase of economic formation has a special impact on non-political secretaries of state, insofar as these other skills are essentially valued, whereby the educational management and planning skills are a fundamental asset.

FIGURE 3.

TRAINING AREAS OF PORTUGUESE SECRETARIES OF STATE ACCORDING TO THEIR POLITICAL OR NON-POLITICAL BACKGROUND



Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

Lisbon is the most important city in the academic degree of secretaries of state. The Lisbon University (Universidade de Lisboa) and the Technical University of Lisbon (Universidade Técnica de Lisboa) were the more populated universities, and the University of Lisbon Law School (Faculdade de Direito de Lisboa) and the Economy and Management Superior Institute (Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão) constituted real nurseries of governmental recruitment⁶. After the capital, the most prominent cities in the national educational path for secretaries of state are Coimbra and Oporto. The number of individuals who attended foreign universities during their academic career deserves, however, special mention. In fact, about 20% of them obtained a degree in a foreign university, with particular emphasis on British and American ones.

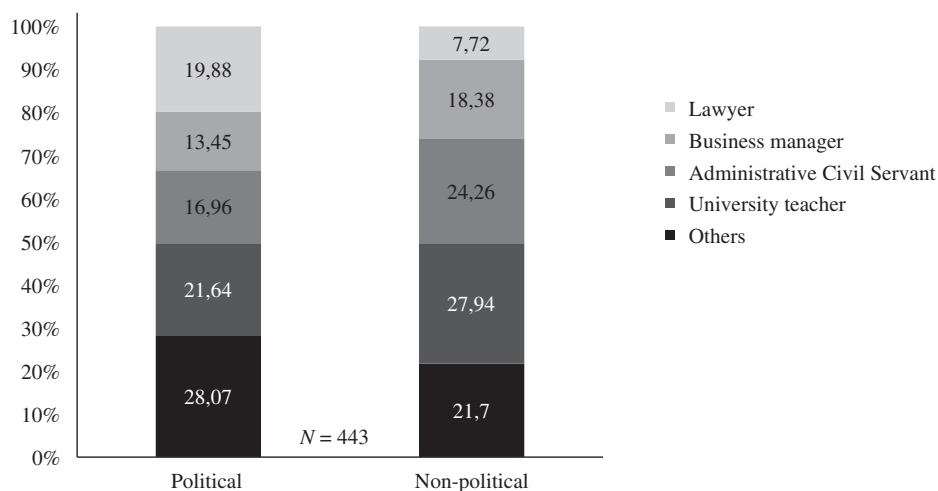
As for the professional field, the main occupations that secretaries of state were engaged in were, respectively, university teacher, administrative civil servant, business manager and lawyer, which together represent about 76% of occupations. There is, however, a clear difference between the professional profile of political and non-political secretaries of state ($\chi^2(4) = 20,077$, $p < 0,001$): among the latter predominate professions involving the acquisition of specific skills, being educational in nature (such as university teachers, sectorial, administrative civil servants) or management (as business managers);

6. One in three secretaries of state graduated in one of these colleges (about 18% from the University of Lisbon Law School and about 14% in the Economy and Management Superior Institute). The Technical Higher Institute (Instituto Superior Técnico) and the University of Coimbra Law School (Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Coimbra) follow each with about 8%.

in contrast, among the first are included more general professions such as lawyer or even full-time politician⁷.

FIGURE 4.

MAIN OCCUPATIONS OF PORTUGUESE SECRETARIES OF STATE ACCORDING TO THEIR POLITICAL OR NON-POLITICAL BACKGROUND



Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

The weight of university teachers, highly skilled in a specific knowledge area, confirms the university as a means of preferential recruitment of Portuguese governmental elites (Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2006: 41-2), and in particular a privileged means to recruit non-political individuals.

The passage through public administration is also significant to the extent that these functions are often a fundamental experience to be recognized as someone with valuable sectoral expertise. This recognition may be even greater when individuals have a long career in the public service, having covered the entire chain of command until they reached the top of the career in a given specific area. Data shows that this occupational route was indeed important especially for non-political secretaries of state. Another important career, more prominent among non-political secretaries of state, is associated with business management. Finally, law is particularly relevant among political secretaries of state who have exercised it often as their secondary activity.

7. We consider as “full-time politician” individuals who, prior to their first appointment as secretaries of state, had a primarily political career (in Parliament, in local government, in policy advisory positions, etc.), and without having never regularly exercised a profession outside politics.

As we can see, most professions are connected to the State. Indeed, about 80% of secretaries of state had had some kind of occupation of a public nature before being appointed to office, leaving only 20% of them linked exclusively to the private sector. These results demonstrate a great weight of professional activities related to the state in access to office, as opposed to strictly private career paths. Bearing in mind the distinction between individuals with political and non-political profile, we found that the latter are more linked to the private sector than the first. Also, the results demonstrate that very rarely non-political secretaries of state acquire specific skills outside the state orbit; the usual being educational skills as university teachers or sectoral skills as administrative civil servants. Similarly, the acquisition of management skills occurs essentially through positions in public institutions and companies.

THE TIME IN POWER: THE GOVERNMENTAL CAREER

A position in government is usually considered the zenith of an individual's political career. But, only if we analyze separately the route *to* government and the route *in* government, we can be able to interpret what this position means to the governmental institution and the individuals occupying it (Rodríguez-Teruel, 2011: 17-18). The time, position and mobility line are, in this sense, of particular interest in the analysis of the governmental career of secretaries of state.

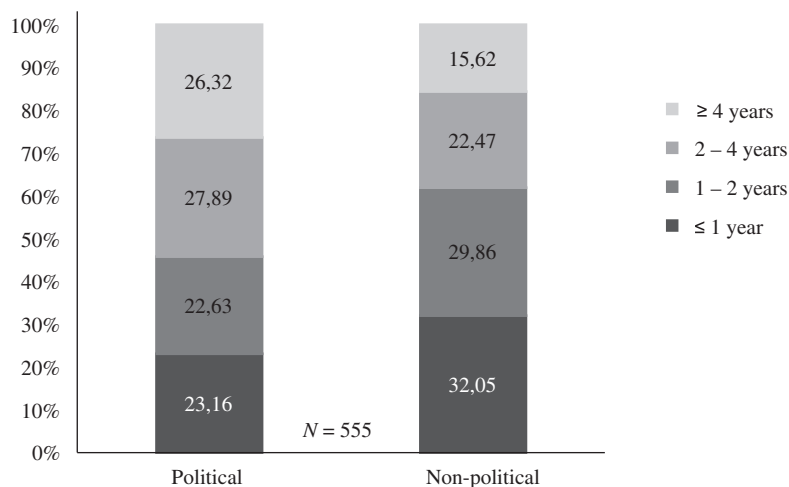
In temporal terms, the average duration of a governmental career as secretary of state is about two and a half years. Although there are cases of longer governmental careers, such as Jorge Figueiredo Lopes, secretary of state for about 13 years, as a rule the secretaries of state have short careers. Short-term governmental careers remove effective capacity to governmental offices, to the extent that in a few months individuals do not even have the time to adapt to governmental functions and dynamics. Given that, as we have seen, most of the secretaries of state did not have any previous political experience, this learning period would be essential for an effective job performance. However, 29% of secretaries of state remained in office for less than one year. On the other hand, only a very small group, consisting of 9 individuals, exceeded eight years and they can, therefore, be considered exceptional cases such as Jorge Figueiredo Lopes.

When we distinguish between political and non-political secretaries of state, there is a slightly higher average duration of governmental career of the first (2.7 compared to 2.1 years). The tendency for political secretaries of state to hold longer careers is statistically significant ($U = 28,205$, $p < 0,001$) and it is usually associated with the existence of higher expectations of return to government by these individuals and the fact that the dismissal of non-political one, as a rule, involves less partisan costs. Indeed, unlike the political, those are perceived as having specific tasks ("men with a mission")⁸, so it is natural completing only one term and being more prone to reshuffles.

8. João Correia, Secretary of State for Justice in the XVIII Constitutional Government, justified in the following manner his earlier departure from government: "I entered government to fulfill a mission. I believe that

FIGURE 5.

GOVERNMENTAL CAREER DURATION OF PORTUGUESE SECRETARIES OF STATE ACCORDING TO THEIR POLITICAL OR NON-POLITICAL PROFILE



Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

The relative short career of governmental elites in Portugal cannot be dissociated from structural factors, such as the transition to democracy and rejuvenation dynamics. Indeed, according to Blondel (1985: 112) the transitions between political regimes may have the effect of shortening the duration of ministerial mandates until the new regime stabilizes. In Portugal, the stabilization process starts from 1982, with the important I Constitutional Amendment (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 116-129). In 1987, a single party government was elected with absolute majority for the first time. Until then, Portugal had only known minority governments, governments composed of various party combinations or presidential initiative governments, formulas that had failed to provide the required governmental stability: between 1976 and 1987 no government completed the 4-year term.

Another important factor associated with short governmental careers is the rejuvenation dynamics in systems where the parliamentary support of the executive is essential (Blondel, 1985: 143). This rejuvenation dynamics tends to become more pronounced when the Prime Minister enjoys greater autonomy in the selection and dismissal of members of the government, which actually happens in Portugal (Lobo, 2005a; Pinto and Tavares de Almeida, 2009). In fact, by choosing a regular substitution strategy of some ministers, the Prime Minister triggers almost always the replacement of secretaries of state under the tutelage of these ministers.

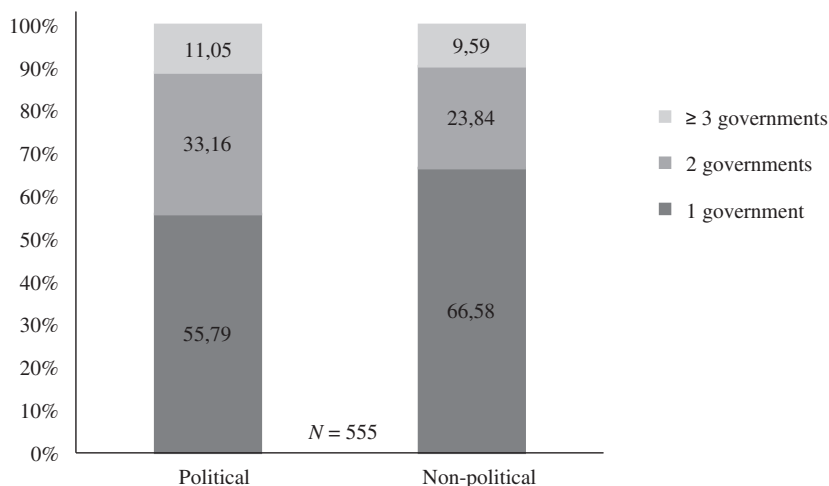
mission is fulfilled and everything else I could do would just spoil it". Interview to the "Jornal i" newspaper (27 November 2010).

Given that the average governmental career is two and a half years and almost a third of secretaries of state occupied the position for a shorter period than one year, we can conclude that the office of secretary of state is far from being a career or even a consolidated stage of political career. Among individuals with political profiles this transience is due in part to the fact that the office of secretary of state is regarded as “passage”, often to ministerial functions but also to return to local or parliamentary politics with greater political capital. Among the non-political this position is usually seen as an occasional opportunity to realize concrete measures in an area where they feel comfortable.

Most secretaries of state were appointed for just one term (although it eventually held different portfolios within that period) of the same party. Consequently, mobility between governments cannot be considered high: the office of secretary of state in Portugal is generally exercised continuously after a single appointment. Still, one in four individuals was appointed in two governments and about 10% held positions in 3 or more governments throughout their governmental careers.

FIGURE 6.

NUMBER OF TERMS CARRIED OUT AS SECRETARIES OF STATE ACCORDING TO THEIR POLITICAL OR NON-POLITICAL BACKGROUND



Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

There is a statistically significant difference between secretaries of state with political profile and non-political profile ($U = 31,161$, $p = 0,022$). Indeed, political ones have greater mobility between governments because, as a rule, they remain politically active after the first appointment, keeping aspirations to return to government. Paraphrasing Dogan when referring to the ministers: “It is beautiful to be a minister. It is still better to remain one or to become one again” (1989: 241). On the contrary, the expected return to

the government by non-political secretaries of state is lower since they generally face political office as an interruption of their career, then return to the profession where they are experts.

The majority of secretaries of state only held a single portfolio along their governmental career. Indeed, about 81% of individuals always held office in the same portfolio (although possibly in more than a government), while 16.4% were appointed in their career in two substantially different portfolios. Even more rarely are those who were appointed for three or more different portfolios. These results suggest a very low mobility between portfolios: in general, when secretaries of state are appointed for the first time to a portfolio, they remain in the same portfolio throughout their governmental career. The low mobility between portfolios is even more pronounced among non-political secretaries of state ($U = 31,635$, $p = 0,013$) and must be construed in the light of the major skills needed for each profile: the specific expertise of these individuals make mobility more difficult between portfolios, since they are specialists in a particular governmental action area. Rather, political secretaries of state have more general skills (Bakema, 1991: 95-6).

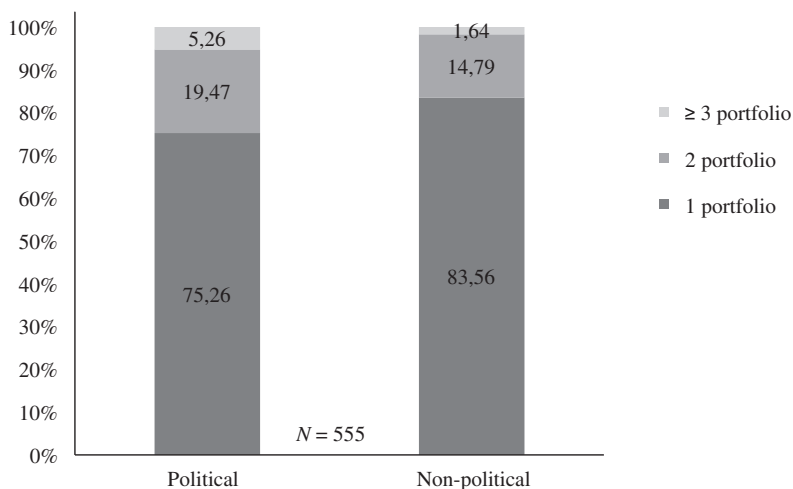
The distribution of secretaries of state through the various ministerial portfolios shows that there is a clear differentiation in the allocation of portfolios based on political versus non-political profiles ($\chi^2(1) = 25,944$, $p < 0,001$). There is a tendency for non-political individuals to be called for economic and social portfolios associated with more complex areas and of technical nature. In contrast, political secretaries of state are mostly present in sovereignty and policy coordination portfolios, where the political content is more pronounced. These portfolios, which made up the core of the post-2nd World War governments and represent the classical functions of the state, actually have a more traditionally political substrate than the remaining portfolios, brought by the development of state functions (Blondel, 1982: 181-189). In this sense, it is understandable the preference for individuals with more political profiles to fill these positions. On the contrary, in more sector-specific ministerial portfolios the specific expertise or management skills becomes a more decisive criterion than the political skills. In the particular case of the secretaries of state, where the specificity of the areas of governance increases, the choice of non-political individuals gains special meaning. So about 79% of secretaries of state with non-political profile did not held political portfolios. Rather, the more general character of the political allows them to not be limited to political portfolios.

The office of secretary of state is important in the access to ministerial career, since about 46% of ministers appointed between 1976 and 1999 had been secretaries of state (Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2006: 48). If we take into account the individuals who exercised the office of secretary of state, the ministerial ascent is more frequent among political. However, not always the appointment is made exclusively on ministerial portfolios on which they have been secretaries of state. In fact, most individuals that ascended to ministers were appointed in ministerial portfolios where they had never exercised that governmental office. There is, however, a difference between profiles: while the political tend to hold different portfolios when they ascend to minister, most non-political are appointed

only in ministerial portfolios where they held the position of secretary of state. This difference should be understood in light of the increased specialization of the skills of these individuals, usually associated exclusively to the ministry area in which they are considered experts. On the contrary, being presumably selected based on their political skills, political can make use of these skills in government in a more diverse set of portfolios.

FIGURE 7.

NUMBER OF PORTFOLIOS ASSIGNED TO A SINGLE SECRETARY OF STATE



Source: Own elaboration with data from the various sources listed in footnote 5.

CONCLUSION

The literature has limited itself to looking at secretaries of state as partisan pawns in coalition governments or as minister's apprentices. However, this position in Portugal can hardly be considered in these terms. On the contrary, rather than a means to reward party elites, a means of partisan balance at the time of distribution of offices in coalition governments, or a means of control of government ministers belonging to the other party ("watch-dogs"), secretaries of state emerge as a depoliticized function, set in a short and occasional governmental career. In fact, secretaries of state are appointed both in coalition governments and one-party governments and mostly do not hold a politicized profile. On the contrary, in general these are individuals with no political experience but with high academic credentials and a professional career where they are considered experts. The exercise of the office as secretary of state appears to most as a momentary interruption from their career, a time when they have the opportunity to apply their expertise with greater social impact.

On the other hand, only in a mitigated way can we consider the position as essentially having a learning basis bearing in mind the preparation of individuals for the position of

minister. In fact, although half of ministers have previously been secretaries of state (Tavares de Almeida & Pinto, 2006: 48), most of them were appointed in a ministry where they had never been secretaries of state. Furthermore, the governmental career is very short, which may have contributed to derail an effective political learning and adaptation to the governing problems.

Thus, the position of secretary of state stands out in Portugal with an effective functional content where the adequacy of the individual profile to sectoral and political functions performed on the job is relevant. Thus, despite the subsequent need to confirm the causality of inferences presented here, we find that important differences emerge between individuals with political experience and individuals with other experience and skills outside politics, such as sectoral and/or management, i.e. between political and non-political secretaries of state. In effect, if the profile of secretary of state is non-political, it is more likely for them to hold a post-graduate degree or even a PhD, possibly in Economics. In professional terms, it increases the chances of them being university teachers and having a career of public nature. The probability of his career being restricted to a single portfolio (non-political) in a single government increases considerably and in case they become ministers, something very unlikely, they are presumed to be appointed in the same ministerial portfolio where the position of secretary of state was held. On the contrary, if the individual has a political profile, it is likely that their educational background is Law and they probably practice law as their main occupation. In terms of governmental career, their generalist profile allows them not to be restricted to political portfolios. On the other hand, it increases the chances for them to be selected in more than one cabinet and more than one portfolio.

The differences between political and non-political secretaries of state show the importance of the political profile in the study of governmental elites. Without this distinction many essential aspects for the understanding of the socio-demographic profile and governmental career of Portuguese secretaries of state would have remained hidden. Thus, secretaries of state have, in general, a non-political profile but a core minority of individuals with political experience, whose socio-demographic characteristics and governmental career are significantly different, remains identifiable. In this sense, we must recognize the coexistence of these two groups with different political profiles within the governmental elite. The evolution of these profiles over time as well as the impacts of this coexistence in ministerial and governmental performance throughout the Portuguese democracy remains to be assessed.

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ANNEX

TABLE 2.

MINISTERS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE OF THE PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS (1976-2011)

Government	PM	Parties in government	Ministers*	Secretaries and under secretaries of state*
I	Soares I	PS	20	56
II	Soares II	PS+CDS	16	38
III	Nobre da Costa	-	14	31
IV	Mota Pinto	-	15	36
V	Pintasilgo	-	16	33
VI	Sá Carneiro	PSD+CDS+PPM	14	40
VII	Balsemão I	PSD+CDS+PPM	18	43
VIII	Balsemão II	PSD+CDS+PPM	18	56
IX	Soares III	PS+PSD	21	54
X	Cavaco Silva I	PSD	13	38
XI	Cavaco Silva II	PSD	25	69
XII	Cavaco Silva III	PSD	25	73
XIII	Guterres I	PS	24	62
XIV	Guterres II	PS	28	69
XV	Barroso	PSD+CDS	21	48
XVI	Santana Lopes	PSD+CDS	19	41
XVII	Sócrates I	PS	21	48
XVIII	Sócrates II	PS	16	38

Source: Own elaboration.

* Total number of individuals appointed during the mandate.

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